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Lawyer calls Japan's commercial use of GI inmates 'slave labor'

PHOTOS BY MARK RANKIN/Stars and Stripes

Above: More than 150 protesters participate in a one-day sit-in demonstration outside the main gate to Marine Corps Headquarters at Camp Foster on Okinawa on Friday. Right: Eizo Yonaha, general secretary of the Okinawa Chapter of All Japan Garrison Forces Labor Union, speaks about the need to give Japanese employees working at U.S. bases the same rights as government workers.

Japanese workers denounce labor laws on U.S. installations

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Western wildfires: An army of firefighters, helped by higher humidity and diminishing winds, gained partial control over a wildfire that burned 14 homes and forced evacuations of hundreds of others in Carson City, Nev.

"I think it's done its worst. I really think it has," said fire incident commander Marty Scheerman. "Now we can do our job."

In California, meanwhile, a 10,000-acre wildfire forced 200 teenagers from two juvenile probation camps early Friday and continued to threaten rural hamlets on the edge of the Angeles National Forest. That blaze was 40 percent contained.

Police beating suit: A suspected car thief has filed a \$25 million claim with the city of Los Angeles over a June 23 videotaped police beating he says left him with brain damage.

Stanley Miller said he also suffered "spinal injuries, trunk-torso injuries, internal injuries, emotional distress, and bruises and contusions." The claim was filed Thursday.

Michael Jackson case: An appeal by news media wanting access to court information in the Michael Jackson child molestation case went unheard for a week because a clerk refused to place it on the court docket, according to court papers.

Attorney Dominic Lanza, who filed the first appeal notice last week, said he checked five days later to make sure the matter was scheduled to be heard by Superior Court Judge Rodney Melville but was told by the appellate clerk it was not filed. Lanza said he took until Thursday to get a clarification from the presiding justice of the California Second District Court of Appeal, who told the clerk that the notice of appeal should be filed.

Tobacco legislation: The Senate approved a plan to give the government broad new powers to regulate the cigarette industry, including the ability to eliminate harmful ingredients in tobacco products and forbid advertising that appeals to children.

The measure empowering the Food and Drug Administration to oversee the sale, marketing and manufacturing of cigarettes was linked on the Senate floor Thursday to a \$12 billion buyout of tobacco farmers.

World

Bird flu warnings: Countries facing bird flu outbreaks should not kill wild birds to keep disease from spreading, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said Friday.



VAL GEMPIS/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Talk to me: Tech. Sgt. Jun Loric, a systems control technician from 374th Communications Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan, uses a wire wrapping tool to cross-connect circuits on a distribution frame. The frame is the central voice and data communication hub that links Yokota to the rest of mainland Japan. The 374th CS technicians perform operator maintenance of communication-control systems and peripheral equipment on 42 sites across Japan.

"Killing wild birds will not help ... control avian influenza outbreaks," Juan Lubroth of FAO Animal Health Service said. "Wild birds are an important element of the ecosystem."

The FAO apparently was responding to Thailand's plan to selectively cull wild storks suspected of carrying the disease.

Militant amnesty: A wanted militant turned himself in to Saudi diplomats in Syria in response to a royal amnesty offer, Saudi newspapers reported Friday.

Ibrahim al-Sadeq al-Qaidy had fought alongside Islamic extremists in Afghanistan and Bosnia, but had more recently been in hiding in Syria, the newspapers reported. It was not clear Friday what charges he faced and whether he was back in his homeland or was at the Saudi Embassy in Damascus.

Britain al-Qaida arrest: A Moroccan arrested in Britain was linked to one of al-Qaida's top leaders in Europe and spoke to him shortly before the Sept. 11 attacks in language suggesting he may have known of the plot, prosecutors said Thursday.

Farid Hilali, 35, telephoned Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas, who is suspected of leading an al-Qaida cell in Spain, a few weeks before Sept. 11, 2001, said prosecutor James Lewis, who spoke for the Spanish govern-

ment in its effort to extradite Hilali.

Business

Tyco acquittal: It was a tense, emotional moment for former Tyco International lawyer Mark A. Belnick, who could have spent the next quarter-century behind bars.

Belnick wept with happiness after he was acquitted of charges he sold his silence for money and luxurious homes while two other company executives stole \$600 million.

A Manhattan jury returned the "not guilty" verdicts Thursday in state Supreme Court amid talks of a possible plea deal.

Napster case: A San Francisco judge has refused to dismiss a suit brought by major record companies against the original Napster's deep-pocketed funders, Hummer Winblad and Bertelsmann AG.

U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel made the decision Wednesday.

Universal Music Group and Capitol Records allege that the firms did more than just write checks to the online music service's inventor, Shawn Fanning. The record companies say the investors maintained hands-on control over the short-lived company and are, therefore, liable for copyright infringement.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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Ex-Marine decries nature of Japan prison work

By DAVID ALLEN
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — When Rodrico Harp was sentenced to seven years at hard labor for his part in the infamous abduction and rape of an Okinawa schoolgirl in 1995, he never thought he'd be assembling cell phones or making auto parts.

"That's what he claims 'hard labor' meant at Kurihama, the Japanese prison near Yokosuka where most American servicemen convicted in Japanese courts wind up."

"I made parts for Mazdas and Nissans," Harp said during a telephone interview from his home in Griffin, Ga. "You had no choice. If you refused to work, they put you in what we called a chill box, a little cell with nothing in it, and they forced you to sit rigidly all day at a desk until it was time to eat and sleep."

"Sometimes, if they thought you were too rowdy or misbehaving or just not doing what they wanted you to do, they'd put you in a straitjacket in a padded room."

That's wrong, says Michael Griffith, a New York-based lawyer who specializes in defending Americans overseas.

"Japan is in gross violation of international law by forcing prisoners to work for commercial companies," Griffith said via telephone from his Long Island home. "It amounts to slave labor, nothing less."

Japan, critics and legal experts disagree. "We do not necessarily see inmates engaging in manufacturing commercial products as a problem," said Makoto Terasaka, executive director of Amnesty International Japan. "We hear arguments criticizing that the practice harms fair competitive market activities. However, products made by inmates are no cheaper than those made in the regular commercial environment. The differences in the price for the products that a company pays and the amount an inmate receives goes in the prison coffers. ...

Marine sentenced 7 years for 1995 rape of 12-year-old claims he was forced to make parts for automakers

Every prison is supposed to be self-supporting," he said.

In addition, Japanese officials say commercial products made in Japanese prisons aren't exported to countries banning forced prison labor. "Prison labor is a part of punishment," said Terasaka. "Therefore, what inmates receive are not wages, but a financial incentive. What we see as a problem is that they work a full eight hours, which deprives them of all opportunities to receive counseling or other necessary treatment."

Griffith, who represented the families of Harp and another defendant in the 1995 case, said American prisoners are forced to work eight hours a day for what amounts to about one dollar a day. They made auto parts and assembled cellular telephones, the former prisoners said.

"It's in direct violation of the Forced Labor Convention of 1930, which prohibits

the use of prisoners for outside contractors," Griffith alleged.

The U.S. State Department lists Japan as a party to the convention. According to papers filed in a 1994 Congressional subcommittee hearing on the prison labor issue, Japan ratified the convention Nov. 31, 1932.

Harp was a 22-year-old Marine private first class when sentenced in March 1996 with Pfc. Kendrick Ledet, 23, and Navy Seaman Marcus Gell, 23, a medic, for raping a 12-year-old girl they abducted from a street corner in Kin village, just outside Camp Hansen. The incident occurred on Labor Day 1995.

Harp and Gell were sentenced to seven years and Ledet to 6½ years of hard labor. All three were released last year and dishonorably discharged.

According to Japanese prison officials, about 20 U.S. servicemen are serving time in Kurihama prison. Their work assignments include making work and cleaning cellblocks, or manufacturing commercial products.

Prison officials declined any further comment.

"While in prison they were working for a Japanese automaker, making emblems for the front hoods and fabricating headrests," Griffith said. "Harp told me that when the U.S. military guys came in to visit them, the Japanese would take the labels off the boxes so they wouldn't see who the prisoners were working for."

Griffith hopes to pressure Congress to hold hearings on the matter, in much the same way two house subcommittees met in 1994 on the Japanese prison labor issue.

At that time Rep. Gary L. Ackerman, (D-NY), chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, was disheartened, he said, to hear the testimony of Christopher Lavinger, a client of Griffith sentenced to 16 months in a Fuchu prison on drug charges.

Lavinger told the congressmen he was struck with an electrified baton twice when he teetered from a rigid position on a chair where he was forced to sit nearly motionless for 12 hours a day after refusing to produce goods for Sega and several Japanese department stores, for the equivalent of about three cents an hour.

"It is my firm opinion that not only is this practice morally reprehensible, but it is also in direct contravention of international agreements on which Japan and most other industrialized and civilized nations have signed," Ackerman said in a statement made June 10, 1994.

"Forced labor such as this violates the general conference of the International Labor Organization's Convention 29, which was ratified by Japan on Nov. 21, 1932."

The convention defines forced or compulsory labor as "any work or service exacted from any person as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law, provided that the said work or service is carried out under the supervision and control of a public authority and that the said person is not hired or placed at the disposal of private individuals, companies or associations."

In some countries, including the United

States, private companies use prison labor, but only with prisoner consent and for minimum wages.

Ackerman said a Japanese official told him the practice was not against Japanese or international law, but companies were instructed not to send any of the products to the United States because of the prohibition concerning prison labor.

"It's too bad the Democrats lost control of Congress the next year and Ackerman lost the chairmanship of the committee," Griffith said. "Nothing ever happened as a result of the hearing."

In a letter to Griffith last year, Harp said he was forced to make and assemble cellular phone parts, car emblems and car panels. Pay ranged from 1,000 yen to 3,000 yen (\$9.43 to \$28.30) per month. He wrote to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo complaining of being forced to work for private Japanese companies and was told in a two-paragraph response that, "SOFA status prohibits the responsibility of the U.S. military in Japan, regardless of where the prisoner is serving his sentence. We have forwarded your letter to the Marine Corps Base Camp Fuji, for further action."

Harp said no action was taken.

Embassy officials directed Stripes inquiries to the U.S. Forces Japan for information concerning the issue. A July 8 response stated, "prisoners receive a monthly visit from their respective service component's prisoner liaison officer."

"During this visit, the status of the prisoner's health and welfare along with any complaints are noted," the USFJ response stated. "If any legal matters arise, they are addressed by the Judge Advocate's office."

"Yeah, they'd come by," Harp said. "They'd walk through and talk to us and tell us we were doing a good job and then they'd go. They saw what we were doing."

Amnesty International released a May report highlighting reports of torture and ill treatment of people while in Japanese custody.

However, Japanese members of the organization say the prison labor issue is not that serious.

Terasaka, the executive director, said the prison labor practices are under review by the Ministry of Justice.

Chiyomi Sumida contributed to this report. E-mail David Allen at: allend@stripes.osd.mil

"Japan is in gross violation of international law by forcing prisoners to work for commercial companies. ... It amounts to slave labor, nothing less."



Michael Griffith
New York-based lawyer

Japanese workers on U.S. bases denounce labor laws

By DAVID ALLEN
AND CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

KITANAKAGASUKU, Okinawa — Members of Japan's largest military base workers' union staged protests in front of Camp Foster on Okinawa and Yokota Air Base near Tokyo on Friday.

The 16,000-member strong Zencho, or Japan Garrison Forces Labor Union, staged the one-day sit-in to highlight its demand for better working conditions.

About 150 union members participated in the demonstration opposite Foster's main gate.

At Yokota, about 70-80 people staged a peaceful demonstration next to Ushihama Garage, across from the Supply Gate.

The Okinawa protest included 19 union representatives from other U.S. bases in Japan, including Misawa, Zama, Yokota, Iwakuni and Sasebo.

Among complaints spelled out in pamphlets distributed by protesters was a claim that two female employees of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's Exchange on Kadena Air Base were mistreated by a supervisor. Both allegedly filed seriously ill after the supervisor received their requests to go home.

"It is very regrettable that such incidents occurred," said Kazuo Yamakawa, the general secretary of the national union who was in Okinawa for Friday's protest.

"Had Japanese labor laws been applied to Japanese employees, those incidents could have been avoided."

The labor union presented 12 demands for changes to workplace rules to the Defense Facilities Administration Agency, the official employer of the Japanese workers.

Chief among the union's demands is a request to apply Japan's maternity protection law to

pregnant employees and elimination of a "use or lose" annual leave system to allow unused annual leave to be carried over to the next year.

The union wants the Japanese government to enter negotiations with the U.S. military to change the Master Labor Contract and Indirect Hiring Agreement to apply Japanese labor laws to all Japanese employees.

"Under the present situation, the bare minimum of working environment standards are not observed," Yamakawa said. "We have been addressing the government with these issues for the past half a century, calling for protection of Japanese workers under Japanese laws."

"There is a limit to our patience," he said.

"Because our employer is the Japanese government, our status should be based on that of a Japanese government employee," said Mariko Maeta of Misawa Air Base, Japan.

"But in reality, we do not receive the same protections as they do."

The protesters also said they wanted the number of official holidays increased. Union members said they get five days fewer than Japanese government employees.

Vince Little contributed to this report. E-mail Chiyomi Sumida and David Allen at: okibureau@stripes.osd.mil

Army looks to recruit from Air Force, Navy

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — With 30,000 billets to fill in the next two years and missions in Iraq and Afghanistan to man for the foreseeable future, the Army is hoping to entice sailors and airmen to switch uniforms.

The Army's new "Operation Blue to Green" program is designed to attract members of the Air Force and Navy, which unlike the Army are trying to shave the size of their respective forces.

The Army began working on the program about four months ago, and a few finishing touches remain before the program is launched, according to Brig. Gen. Sean Byrne, the Army's Director of Military Personnel Policy.

But the Army already has posted an advertisement for Blue to Green on its Web site, www.goarmy.com, as was first reported by U.S. News & World Report.

Meanwhile, over the next 14 months, Army recruiters will go to Navy and Air Force bases to talk to servicemembers who might be eligible for the transfer program, Byrne said in a Friday roundtable discussion with Pentagon reporters.

"We are going to actively recruit these [servicemembers], with the full concurrence and support" of the Navy and Air Force, Byrne said.

Blue to Green has been adopted by Air Force officials' "as part of our force-shaping initiative," Air Force spokeswoman Jennifer Stephens confirmed Thursday. "Force shaping" is the Air Force's name for its efforts to trim down its force.

The Air Force must cut thousands from its roster because soaring retention rates and stop-loss orders have boosted the service's manning beyond its Congressionally authorized end strength of 359,000 airmen.

About 22,000 airmen must be gone by Sept. 31, 2005, the end of the government's fiscal 2005, Stephens said.

The Navy, meanwhile, is reducing its size by 7,900 in order to

U.S. Navy expands its early-out plan

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Navy officials anticipate between 400 and 600 sailors will use the service's Early Transition Program, which lets eligible sailors separate up to 12 months earlier than planned.

The program has been changed since being introduced last year, and will let sailors separate a year early, rather than six months.

About 560 sailors took advantage of the program last year, said Lt. j.g. Kyle Raines, a spokesman for Navy Personnel Command.

"We want all of our good sailors to stick around and stay Navy ... and this is really designed for those who have jobs or educational opportunities lined up, and we're giving them the opportunity to fill those personal goals a year earlier," Raines said.

The program is not available to sailors under a selective re-enlistment bonus or in a rating that is SRB eligible, or in who are

SEALs (Sea, Air and Land), explosive ordnance disposal, divers or Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman, or in a nuclear rating.

"Of the sailors in those special categories, the reasoning they're not eligible is because they are in critical or undermanned ratings, or because we offered them SRBs for re-enlisting, and we asked Congress for money to help us offer those bonuses and it would not meet good business practice to let them go early if we were offering them more money to stay," Raines said.

Sailors can submit requests, going through their chain of command, to Navy Personnel Command. All separations under the program must be effected by Sept. 15.

For the most part, officials anticipate mostly first-termers will take advantage, Raines said. "They make up the largest percentage of people getting out of the Navy anyway, and frankly, the longer you're in, the longer likely to stay."

"For sailors with impending educational

or civilian career plans, this program could offer just the extra time and opportunity they need to get started on a new life," Vice Adm. Gerry Hoewing, chief of Naval Personnel, said in a statement. "I am delighted that this great retention we are continuing to experience has allowed us to offer the program again this year."

As of June, the Navy was on pace to retain 59.6 percent of eligible sailors in Zone A, or those with less than six years of service, for fiscal 2004. The goal is 56 percent. In Zone B (those with six to 10 years of service) the pace is 73.2 percent, above the target of 70 percent.

The percentages do not count those whose applications have yet to be processed, Raines said.

If the Navy surpasses its retention goals, officials could adjust recruitment goals to keep personnel numbers in check.

More information found in Navy message NAVADMN 151/04, and available at: www.burgesstribes.com or e-mail sandra.jontz@tribes.com

fund future technologies.

Given the size of the potential enlistee pool, "I feel very optimistic that we're going to get a few thousand" new soldiers out of the program, Byrne said.

The services always have welcomed as enlistees personnel with prior military service in another branch, and there is a small-scale "Intra-service Transfer" program that targets officers, Byrne said. But Blue to Green is the first time the Army has actively recruited members of other branches who are still serving.

Such servicemembers are attractive to the Army because "It's a population that has already served and been successful in their career," he said.

The new program is particularly focused on sailors and airmen in grades E-1 to E-5, Byrne said, as well as "some junior officers with the skills we need."

Selectees will undergo a four-week version of boot camp that the Army is calling the "Warrior Transition Course," to be held

at Fort Knox, Ky., Byrne said.

The Warrior course will replace the normal nine-week boot camp the Army uses to train individuals with prior experience from other services who move into the Army.

The goal is to ensure that "there's no break in service" for those who are selected for the program, Byrne said — including ensuring that servicemembers receive a continuous paycheck and no interruptions to medical and other benefits.

The Army is looking in particular for enlisted personnel whose Air Force Specialty Code or Navy

rate convert directly to an Army

Military Occupational Specialty, Byrne said.

Army personnel specialists have found 120 AFSCs that translate directly into 37 Army MOSs. Army MOS categories are broader than the Air Force's, Byrne explained.

The Navy has 112 ratings that translate directly into 42 Army MOSs, Byrne said.

Servicemembers whose AFSC or rate transfer directly into an MOS will receive any enlistment bonus that the Army currently offers for that skill, Byrne said.

The Army will also consider accepting airmen and sailors whose specialty does not directly convert to the Army MOS, but who are willing to reclassify and learn a new skill the Army needs, Byrne said.

Airmen and sailors who are reclassifying will also receive any bonus that is available for their new MOS, Byrne said.

Those servicemembers will naturally require additional skills training once they graduate from the Warrior course, Byrne said.

Bonuses aren't guaranteed for servicemembers who sign up for Blue to Green.

But such stipends are relatively plentiful in the Army — 190 out of the Army's 345 MOSs have a signing bonus, Byrne said. For MOSs that offer bonuses, the average stipend for a three-year enlistment is \$4,200, while the average bonus for a six-year hitch is \$8,300, Byrne said.

For more information on Operation Blue to Green, go to www.goarmy.com/otg/index.htm or e-mail Lisa.Burgess@tribes.com

The services always have welcomed as enlistees personnel with prior military service in another branch ... But Blue to Green is the first time the Army has actively recruited members of other branches who are still serving.

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Study: Too few family members get support

Family support professionals and volunteers have expanded programs to help military families cope with longer, more frequent separations due to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But weaknesses in coordination, communication and command oversight still deny too many families access to the information and help they need, says a new study by the National Military Family Association.

Just as the operational military must transform missions and force structure for a protracted war on terrorism so must family support change for a new era, says the report, "Serving the Home Front: An Analysis of Military Family Support from September 11, 2001, through March 31, 2004."

Stabilizing military home life requires more command involvement, better marketing and outreach to families living off base, standardized staff training, and stronger partnerships with communities including local agencies, schools and even media, the report says.

NMFA, the "voice of military families," wrote the report based on responses from more than 2,500 military spouses to an online survey. NMFA also conduct-

ed spouse focus groups and asked family support providers to complete questionnaires. A NMFA team then analyzed the results, shaped recommendations and wrote the 36-page report.

Joyce Wessel Raezer, NMFA director of government relations, said family support programs weren't ready for the number and length of deployments and mobilizations ordered since the 9/11 attacks.

"There were a lot of programs that people thought would work. What wasn't anticipated was the extra burden of communicating what's available, helping families sort out realistic expectations."

Managing expectations are the challenge, she said, "every time a deployment is extended or communication with a servicemember breaks down. Nobody was prepared to take that on, to say, 'We've got to do some educating

here to help our families more realistically understand what to expect.'"

Family support before 9/11 assumed predictable, limited deployments, not tens of a year or more for hundreds of thousands of troops, many of them mobil-

and thoughtful communication, consistency in family support training.

Susan Evers, project coordinator, has a husband and two sons in the Army. One son completed a tour in Iraq. The other could be sent. Evers said she hopes the report is read "by everyone, from head-quarter staffs and service leaders down to unit commanders and volunteers, so that at every level they learn how to improve on what they do for families."

Some of what's being done is extraordinary and imaginative, NMFA officials found. Its own study was funded by Sears, Roebuck and Co., with part of a \$2 million donation to NMFA. Most of that money is underwriting Operation Purple, special summer camps for military children in the United States to help deal with the stress of parents deployed. The full NMFA report and details of Operation Purple can be found at www.nmfa.org.

But NMFA also found disappointing levels of support. Trus-

stration is higher among families living off base and, in some cases, hundreds of miles from military communities and base support programs. NMFA took special note of problems for families in understanding Tricare, accessing preventive medical health services and finding childcare.

Lisa Clay, whose husband Don is a Marine Corps platoon sergeant running daily patrols in Iraq, headed research and wrote the report. Military spouses overall, she said, "aren't disgruntled" but they expect more thoughtful, coordinated help. Clay recalled, for example, that a hospital commander arranged a briefing for families on changes to Tricare. But it occurred at 11 a.m. on a weekday when many spouses are working.

Clay also noted that deploying troops are encouraged to provide spouses with powers of attorney. Yet some base finance offices don't even recognize those powers, turn away spouses seeking copies of, or changes to, member leave and earnings statements, she said.

With family support programs so dependent on command involvement, one of NMFA's main recommendations is that attention to family needs be made a rated item on unit or base commanders' fitness reports.

Comments are welcomed. Write Military Update, P.O. Box 2111, Centerville, Va. 20120-1111, e-mail milupdate@aol.com or visit: www.militaryupdate.com

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

"There were a lot of programs that people thought would work. What wasn't anticipated was the extra burden of communicating what's available, helping families sort out realistic expectations."

Joyce Wessel Raezer

NMFA director of government relations

lized National Guard members and reservists.

"A church would say 'Let's get a support group for families of deployed servicemembers.' That's a nice idea," said Raezer. "But how do you sustain those volunteer efforts for the long term?"

The report emphasizes the positive, describing successful initiatives and encouraging broad reforms. It doesn't press for new, costly programs. It seeks better coordination, more aggressive

31st MEU Marines train on Guam

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit will conduct urban warfare training on Guam for the next two weeks.

Area residents were informed Friday that there would be increased aircraft activity over the island during the training, which takes place from July 17 to July 30 as part of the 31st MEU's preparation for deployment to the Western Pacific, said 1st Lt. Trykiakus Brown, public affairs officer for the 31st MEU.

"Marines from the 31st MEU could be called upon to evacuate Americans and other noncombatants from urban areas, provide humanitarian assistance and civic action, make a show of force and other operations," Brown said in a press release.

He said the training is being coordinated with local and federal government officials, including the FBI and local law enforcement agencies.

"This type of training has and is routinely conducted in such major cities as Atlanta, New York, New Orleans, Miami and San Francisco," Brown pointed out.

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Philippines pulls more soldiers from Iraq

BY DANICA KIRKA
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Philippines withdrew 11 soldiers from Iraq on Friday to meet the demands of kidnappers holding a truck driver hostage, ignoring warnings from the United States that the move sends the wrong signal to terrorists.

The decision to pull out the head of the humanitarian mission and 10 other soldiers outraged Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's allies in the war on terror, who fear that bargaining for the life of Angelo dela Cruz will set a dangerous precedent for the troops and citizens of other coalition members.

American troops and their Iraqi allies in the capital, Baghdad, continued to face at-

tacks. Insurgents detonated a car bomb targeting a U.S. military convoy in Baghdad, wounding one U.S. soldier and four civilians, the American command and Iraqi police said.

Also Friday, attackers fired machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades at an Iraqi police patrol, killing one and wounding another, police officer Ammar Najai said.

The troubles came amid warnings by interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi that insurgents would hit harder in the coming weeks. He announced the creation of a new intelligence service Thursday designed specifically to combat terrorism and vowed to annihilate guerrillas seeking to derail efforts to bring peace.

Suicide bombings, shootings and car bombs have rocked the country since the

June 28 transfer of sovereignty from U.S. occupation officials to the interim government.

Insurgents also have kidnapped dozens of outsiders in hopes of pressuring coalition forces taking part in the U.S.-led coalition to withdraw. The strategy also appears intended to further isolate the United States, which already provides the bulk of the 160,000-member multinational force in Iraq.

The Philippines, with 7 million workers overseas, proved particularly susceptible. Arroyo faced overwhelming domestic pressure from citizens, many of whom have family members working abroad.

People lit candles and held prayer vigils Friday for the safe return of dela Cruz, who was taken hostage while working as a truck driver here. Hours later, 11 Filipino troops drove over the border into Kuwait in three ve-

hicles and were seen off by a delegation of U.S. troops, said Lt. Col. Hashem Abdullah, an Iraqi officer at the border town of Safwan.

Arroyo's pullout decision does not apply to thousands of Filipino workers who work at U.S. bases in Iraq, performing menial tasks such as serving food and cleaning toilets that free military personnel for crucial combat duty.

Other coalition members, such as Australian Prime Minister John Howard, called the decision a mistake.

"If you give in the game's over and they will increase the intensity of their attacks," he said.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Thursday the decision "sends the wrong signal to terrorists."

Associated Press writer Hovio Hranjani in Manila, Philippines, contributed to this report.



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GI cowardice case dropped

The Associated Press

DENVER — The military has decided not to pursue charges against a U.S. soldier accused of cowardice after he sought help for panic attacks.

After Staff Sgt. George Andrew Pogany asked for counseling while in Iraq, his commanders sent him home to Fort Carson to face a court-martial on a cowardice charge, which can be punishable by death.

The Army later replaced it with the lesser dereliction-of-duty charge, which could have put Pogany behind bars for six months.

On Thursday, Pogany and military officials confirmed the case is finished. Sgt. 1st Class Blake Waltman, a public affairs officer with the Army's Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., said charges have been

dropped because the military has learned Pogany "may have a medical problem that requires care and treatment."

Pogany, 32, had been the first U.S. soldier since Vietnam to be charged with cowardice. A five-year veteran, Pogany said his problems surfaced after he saw the mangled body of an Iraqi man cut in half by American gunfire.

He says he has physical and psychological problems that stem from brain damage caused by a reaction to the anti-malaria drug Lariam. He is part of a military study looking into complaints from U.S. troops exposed to drugs and chemicals.

Pogany, assigned to a Green Beret intelligence team with the 10th Special Forces Group, began vomiting after seeing the Iraqi civilian's body three days after being sent to Iraq. Pogany said he hopes to retire from the Army soon.

First-class travel for GIs

DALLAS — Eight soldiers flying home from Iraq for two weeks of R&R flew in style instead of coach after first-class passengers offered to swap seats with them.

"The soldiers were very, very happy, and the whole aircraft had a different feeling," flight attendant Lorrie Gammon told The Dallas Morning News in Thursday's editions.

The June 29 seat-swap on American Airlines Flight 866 from Atlanta to Chicago started before boarding, when a businessman approached one of the soldiers and traded his seat.

Marine's return

QUANTICO, Virginia — It could be months or months before a Marine who disappeared in Iraq and later turned up in Lebanon is deemed fit to return to duty, a spokesman said.

Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun arrived at Quantico Marine base on Thursday after leaving Germany, where he had undergone six days of evaluation at a U.S. military hospital.

Lt. Col. David Lapan, a Marine Corps spokesman, said Hassoun would continue to undergo a "repatriation" process until the military support team monitoring his recovery decides he is ready to go back to work. His home station is Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

From The Associated Press

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Police officers and residents look at the burned remains of a section of a school building Friday in the town of Kumbakonam, about 215 miles south-west of Madras, India. The fire, believed to have started in a first-floor kitchen, killed at least 84 children and injured 22, a local government official said.

AP



At least 84 dead, 22 hurt in school blaze in India

BY S. SRINIVASAN

The Associated Press

KUMBAKONAM, India — Flames swept through a thatched-roofed school Friday, trapping dozens of children who clung to brick and concrete in vain to escape after many of their teachers fled. At least 84 children were killed and 22 injured.

No teachers died, and a senior fire officer said it was because they abandoned the children and fled. But the district government administrator said it was too early to know, and he noted that some 700 children got out alive and were likely aided by teachers.

The fire started in a kitchen and jumped across the flammable roofs of the three-story, private Lord Krishna Middle School, said J. Radhakrishnan, the administrator for the Thanjavur district, 1,300 miles south of New Delhi, India's capital.

He said that when the fire

began at 11 a.m., the building was packed with 800 students — most aged 6 to 13 — in rooms shared by up to six classes at a time.

Afterward, local television showed dozens of small, blackened bodies piled two or three deep, covering the entire floor inside a large hall. Some died a lying unconscious in a large emergency ward.

Doctors applied ointment on the scalded bodies of the injured, and nurses covered them with large banana leaves, believed to soothe the burning skin.

Parents, many crying, waved hand-held bamboo and plastic fans — despite air conditioning — to soothe the inflamed wounds. Hundreds more waited outside the hospital.

By evening, 45 bodies had been cremated in mass ceremonies, Radhakrishnan said. Several bodies were taken for cremations in nearby villages, where many children came from. The official low-

ered the number of injured — earlier put at more than 100 — to 22.

"As far as we can make out, the fire started in the kitchen of the school on the ground floor," Radhakrishnan told The Associated Press. "The sparks flying up would have set fire to the thatched roof on the first floor."

The school's long, narrow, windowless classrooms each had only one exit. A reporter for New Delhi Television News described marks on the walls that she said showed the children had tried to tear through the bricks and concrete.

Hundreds of small wooden stools lay toppled on the blackened floor, strewn with rubber slippers, shoes, schoolbags, notebooks, lunch boxes and clothes. Blackboards still bore traces of the lessons the children were learning.

Police later said they had arrested the school principal, Pulara Palanichamy and three kitchen workers who were preparing lunch, and intended to charge them with negligence.

Japan: Jenkins will arrive in Tokyo on Sunday

BY AUDREY MCAVOY

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Alleged U.S. Army deserter Charles Jenkins will travel to Japan for medical treatment this weekend despite the risk that he could be extradited to the United States, Japanese officials said Friday.

Jenkins, accused of defecting to North Korea in 1965, will be hospitalized in Tokyo on Sunday after he arrives with his Japanese wife and his two daughters, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said at a news conference.

Bringing Jenkins to Japan is a top political priority for Tokyo. He has been in Indonesia for the last few days meeting with his family.

A North Korean official who accompanied Jenkins to Indonesia told reporters he wouldn't stand in the way of Jenkins traveling to Japan.

"Wherever the family decides to live, we will respect their wishes," Japanese public broadcaster NHK showed one of the officials telling reporters in Jakarta. "We hope Jenkins recovers."

Jenkins' wife, Hitomi Soga, was kidnapped and taken to the North by communist agents in 1978. She wasn't allowed to return to her homeland until 2002, when Pyongyang admitted it had abducted more than a dozen Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s to teach Japanese to its spies.

Since then, Soga has been liv-

ing separated from her family because Jenkins declined to leave North Korea over fears the United States would demand his extradition to face desertion charges. The United States may not ask for custody while he is hospitalized for medical treatment, however.

Soga says she wants to live in Japan with her family.

"Jenkins must be treated so he can recover soon," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters Friday. "There is no change to our policy of enabling Soga's family to live in Japan together."

Jenkins earlier had refused to go to Japan because of his fears he would be extradited. But Kyodo News, citing unidentified Japanese officials in Jakarta, reported that Jenkins told the Northern officials on Friday that he would go to Japan and gave them the North Korean case he had with him, saying he wouldn't need it anymore.

Japanese doctors sent by the government to examine Jenkins in Indonesia recommended he be sent to Japan for further care. Jenkins said he was suffering from problems following abdominal surgery in North Korea.

Washington says Jenkins is wanted on four charges including desertion. He could face life in prison if convicted.

"Once he is in Japan, he — falls under the authority of the U.S. military," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in Washington. "We intend to request custody when we have the legal opportunity to do so."

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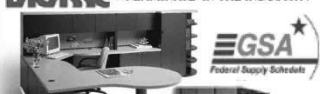


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Monsoon South Asia floods up to 400

BY FARID HOSSAIN
The Associated Press

DIHAKA, Bangladesh — Monsoon floods continued to wreak havoc across India, Bangladesh and Nepal, submerging more villages while pushing the death toll higher with possibly three more months of annual rains to go, officials said Friday.

About 400 people in South Asia have died since the monsoon started in June, with new deaths reported in Bangladesh and Nepal on Friday, according to official tallies and news reports. Last year, monsoon flooding in the region killed 1,500 people from mid-June to mid-October.

In Bangladesh, 15 people — including eight children — drowned in flood waters on Thursday, raising the death toll there to 83, the Sangbad and Bangladesh Observer dailies reported.

About 15,000 people fled for higher ground after the Padma River burst through an embankment Thursday in western Bangladesh, inundating 15 villages, relief officials said.

The Jamuna River surged through another mid-embankment in the northern region of Dinajpur, swamping 16 villages and leaving about 15,000 people stranded,

the officials said on condition of anonymity.

Floods caused by heavy rains have engulfed nearly half of Bangladesh, leaving more than 5 million people marooned in their houses, or huddled on embankments or in boats.

In India, 235 people have perished in landslides, building collapses, or from waterborne disease. Many others have drowned or been electrocuted since the monsoon began. No new deaths were reported in India on Friday, although weather officials predicted heavy rains in Bihar, Assam and other eastern states, where most flood-related deaths have occurred.

In Nepal, fresh rainfall was making it difficult for rescuers to reach areas hit by landslides and flooding, as the Himalayan kingdom's death toll increased to 77 on Friday, officials said.

Rescue helicopters with food, medicine and tents were grounded by deteriorating weather in the capital, Kathmandu, said Home Ministry spokesman Gopendra Pandey.

Soldiers joined volunteers to repair breached embankments in the north, the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha news agency reported.



Flood-affected villagers huddle in a boat as they try to move to safer areas Friday in the village of Benibad in Bihar, India. Monsoon floods that began in June have killed hundreds and stranded millions.

Japan detains ex-chess champ Fischer

BY ALLAN LENGEL
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The hunt for Bobby Fischer, the unpredictable chess legend, ended this week when he was detained in Japan, where he awaits possible deportation on charges that he attended a 1992 match in Yugoslavia in violation of a U.S. ban.

The Japanese Immigration Bureau detained the 61-year-old Fischer on Tuesday at Narita International Airport in Tokyo at the urging of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which had recently stepped up efforts to track the fugitive, U.S. authorities said Thursday.

"He is in custody in Japan, and we are awaiting a determination whether he'll be deported back to the United States to face charges," said Allan Doody, special agent in charge of the im-

migration agency's Washington field office.

The arrest capped a cat-and-mouse game between U.S. authorities and Fischer, who shuttled among several nations, including Japan, the Philippines and Hungary, to avoid arrest. A grand jury in Washington charged him with violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act by going to Yugoslavia for the chess match against Boris Spassky.

The charge, handed up in 1992, carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

U.S. authorities, acting on the outstanding

warrant, recently canceled Fischer's U.S. passport after discovering that he had a 90-day visa to visit Japan. Authorities there detained him at the airport for failing to possess valid travel documents, U.S. authorities said.

In August 1992, the Treasury Department sent Fischer a letter warning him not to go to Yugoslavia to play Spassky. It explained that U.S. citizens were forbidden to get involved in "business or commercial activities" with Yugoslavia because of its role in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fischer ignored the letter and headed off to Yugoslavia to reclaim the championship he had surrendered in 1975 after refusing to defend it against Anatoly Karpov of Russia.

At a news conference in Yugoslavia in September 1992, Fischer held up the letter and spit on it. He went on to beat Spassky and receive \$3.3 million.

Fischer



ArS meeting warns of dangers in Asia, Eastern Europe

BY EMMA ROSS
The Associated Press

BANGKOK, Thailand — The largest AIDS conference to date ended Friday with delegates highlighting soaring infections among women and warning of explosive epidemics in Asia and Eastern Europe.

Nelson Mandela, who turns 86 on Sunday, took the podium at the closing ceremony and declared he "cannot rest" until the world turns its back against the HIV pandemic.

"History will surely judge us harshly if we do not respond with all the energy and resources that we can bring to bear in the fight against HIV/AIDS," the former South African president told the 15th International AIDS Conference.

Much of the six-day gathering focused on the politics of getting more lifesaving antiretroviral medicine to HIV-infected people in the developing world, especially in Africa.

The United States' the most generous donor nation on AIDS — came under intense criticism for its drug-funding policy and for trying much of its money to programs that em-

phasize abstinence over the use of condoms, the most trusted HIV-blocking method.

Mandela joined U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in delivering vigorous calls for more donations to U.N. efforts to fight the disease. Software magnate Bill Gates' foundation and the European Union announced new grants totaling \$102 million.

This year's conference, drawing nearly 20,000 scientists, policy-makers, HIV-infected people and their advocates, not only boosted awareness of HIV but raised the accountability of world leaders, said Mechai Viravaidya, the most prominent AIDS campaigner in host country Thailand.

The most-anticipated breakthrough on AIDS, a vaccine, remained elusive. Experts called for urgent work on alternatives for prevention in the interim, including HIV-killing gels to protect women from people who refuse to use condoms. An estimated 38 million people are infected with HIV, 25 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. In Asia, 7.2 million people are infected, and epidemiologists warned that Asia and Eastern Europe face a critical phase with infections spreading from injecting drug users to sex



Former South Africa President Nelson Mandela urged the world to devote more resources to fighting AIDS, at the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, which ended Friday.

workers, whose clients can launch the virus into the broader community. Prostitution is considered the main engine driving the spread in Asia, many experts said, warning that epidemics could explode unless condom use is boosted.

The next conference is to be held in Toronto in 2006.

Sri Lanka has epidemic

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka urged citizens on Friday to prevent mosquitoes from breeding amid a dengue fever epidemic in the tropical island country.

Residents were being told to keep their premises clean and ensure that water does not accumulate in empty pots or other containers where mosquito larvae can grow, said Tissa Vitharana, an adviser to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

At least 54 people have died from dengue in the past six months, compared with 35 for all of last year, Vitharana said.

Lebanese protest fees

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Thousands of Lebanese went without their beloved cell phones to protest fees they believe are too high, the consumer advocacy group that helped organize the boycott said Friday.

Just over half of Lebanon's 850,000 cell phone owners had complied by the time the 24-hour boycott ended Thursday night, said Zuhair Berro, president of the Consumer Leverage Group. He based the figure on his group's sample of 4,000 cell phone owners.

Cell phones are considered so necessary to life in Lebanon that many in this country of 4.5 million carry two.

Talal Assaf, an adviser to Minister of Telecommunications Jean-Louis Kordahi, said the ministry would have no comment until it had studied a consumer response to the boycott call. The Kuwaiti firm Mobile Telecom Company and the German firm Telecel each operate a GSM network in Lebanon for the government.

Suspects released

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Malaysia authorities on Friday released five suspected Islamic militants who had been detained without trial for the past three years, saying they have repented and could no longer a threat to national security.

The five were accused of being members of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, a shadowy militant group that officials allege has links to the Southeast Asian terror organization Jemaah Islamiyah.

The five were among about a dozen suspects who were arrested in early 2001 after officials discovered a cache of weapons they said were used by the group to stage robberies to fund militant activities.

The suspects were sent to a prison camp in northern Malaysia under a security law that allows detention without trial for two years at a time under renewable government order.

Singapore defends trip

TRIMAS SINGAPORE — Singapore defended on Friday the deputy prime minister's surprise trip to Taiwan, saying the visit — which incensed China — was essential to enable the city-state's next leader to understand "a potential flash point" in Asia.

A four-page statement from the office of Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said Singapore officials had been asked to visit beforehand as "a courtesy" and had then resisted pressure from China to call it off.

Lee said the deputy prime minister, Singapore's first prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew — will assume Singapore's top job later this year, replacing Goh Chong Lik. The date of the transfer could be announced next week.

From The Associated Press

Patent decision riles Pfizer

Viagra maker says China's move may curb investment

BY JAKE LLOYD-SMITH

The Associated Press

SINGAPORE — Pfizer Inc., the world's largest drug company, lashed out Friday at Chinese regulators' recent decision to overturn its local patent on Viagra, warning that it might cut future investment in the world's most populous country.

"We are extremely disappointed. The basis of fair trade is respecting intellectual property," Chairman and Chief Executive Henry McKinnell said in Singapore, where he was opening a new manufacturing plant.

Pfizer is appealing a decision by China's State Intellectual Property Office to overturn the anti-impotence drug's local patent because it didn't meet Chinese patent law specifications.

Asked if the dispute might dissuade Pfizer, whose operations

span the globe, from further investments in China, McKinnell replied: "Absolutely."

The patent will remain in force while the case is considered over the coming three months.

The patent office's decision came after a group of Chinese drug companies filed a petition in 2001 seeking to nullify Pfizer's patent for sildenafil citrate — Viagra's active ingredient — saying it failed to fulfill the "novelty requirement" of Chinese law.

McKinnell said counterfeiting is rampant in China — a common complaint from Western multinational companies that have flocked in recent years to the region's fastest-growing economy.

"There's massive counterfeiting of consumer products and pharmaceutical products in China," he said. "Ninety percent of Viagra sold in China is fake or counterfeit."

He also said his company had done a poor job over the past decade at making its case in the often-heated debate about the rising cost of many modern medicines.

"An investment in modern medicine actually saves money elsewhere," with less need for surgery, or doctors' time, he said.

"Healthier nations are wealthier nations."

Drug discovery and testing typically take many years and large sums of money before new products are ready for the public.

McKinnell said many governments take an unduly narrow view of the costs and benefits involved in patient treatment and care. He didn't name specific countries.

"You don't have to look at health care as a cost; you (can) recognize that like education, it is an investment in the future," he said.

Women strip naked to protest custodial killing in north India

BY WASBIH HUSSAIN

The Associated Press

GAUHAATI, India — In a highly unusual protest, some 40 women stripped naked and staged an angry demonstration at a paramilitary base in northeastern India to protest the death of a 32-year-old woman who they say was killed in custody, officials and news reports said Friday.

With nothing but banners to cover their bodies, the women stood Tuesday in front of the Assam Rifles headquarters in Imphal, capital of Manipur state, and demanded the culprits be punished, police said.

Some of the banners read, "Indian Army rape us" and "Indian Army take our flesh."

The women alleged that soldiers of Assam Rifles raped, tortured and then killed Thangiam Manorama, The Telegraph newspaper reported.

Assam Rifles officials could not be reached for comment and Manipur's top elected official, Chief Minister Bhoji Singh, was evasive about what action would be taken to investigate the allegations and bring anyone found guilty to justice.

"After a meeting of my Cabinet, I have asked the authorities to ensure that human rights violations do not take place at the hands of security forces engaged in counterinsurgency operations," Singh said.

Assam Rifles is the main paramilitary force fighting separatist insurgents in India's northeast. Manipur, which shares a porous



Naked women protesters shout slogans Thursday against the alleged rape, torture and murder of Thangiam Manorama by paramilitary soldiers in Imphal, capital of the northeastern Indian state of Manipur.

border with Myanmar, has 17 insurgent groups, most of them fighting for independence from India.

Local media reports said Manorama was picked up by the Assam Rifles from her home on Sunday, and that the soldiers accused her of having links with separatist rebels.

Hours later, her bullet-riddled body was found 2½ miles away from her home in Imphal.

On Friday, police tightened security in Imphal, fearing more protests. A curfew was imposed in the city, banning any public gathering.

"We are not taking chances as passions are high just now," the state's deputy police chief, told The Associated Press.

He also refused comment on whether there would be a criminal investigation into the cause of Manorama's death.

Japanese women still living the longest

TOKYO — Japanese women set a new record for the world's longest life expectancy last year, retaining the title for the 19th straight year, the government said Friday.

Japanese women have had the globe's longest life expectancy since 1985. Researchers say Japan's traditional fish-based, low-fat diet may be the secret to longevity.

There are an estimated 20,500 Japanese over the age of 100, and women make up about 85 percent of the total, according to government figures.

Cartoonist sues Nike

BEIJING — A Chinese Internet cartoonist is fighting athletic shoe-maker Nike over a stick figure, state media reported Friday.

Zhu Zhiqiang has filed a lawsuit asking for \$240,000 in compensation from Nike as well as a public apology for copying his "Little Match" cartoon illustration in one of its worldwide ad campaigns, the China Daily said. The Beaverton, Oregon-based Nike denied Zhu's claim.

The case is an unusual reversal of roles for China, which has frequently been criticized by the United States for being lax about protecting patents and other intellectual property.

Sensitive mistake made

BUCHAREST, Romania — Medical authorities are investigating a Romanian doctor after he allegedly cut off a patient's penis accidentally during testicular surgery, officials said Friday.

The 34-year-old patient's penis was severed during an operation at a Bucharest hospital on Tuesday.

Dr. Ioan Vasilescu, a plastic surgeon who performed an operation on the man Thursday to help him urinate, said the patient was in stable condition.

The urologist was temporarily suspended pending the investigation. If found guilty of malpractice, he could lose his license to practice medicine.

Monkey and its brain saved

TAIPEI, Taiwan — A monkey was recuperating at a wildlife park in Taiwan after being rescued from a restaurant that planned to sell slices of the animal's brain while he was alive in a cage, a local government official said Friday.

A tourist in the central mountainous area of Nantou bought the monkey, a Formosan macaque, after he saw that customers at a restaurant were about to eat its brains, said Huang Kuo-chen, a forestry official in Taoyuan county, where the tourist lives.

The monkey is now being held at a wildlife park before experts evaluate whether it can be released in the wild, Huang said.

Dog sniffs out reward

BANGKOK, Thailand — An army dog with a nose for M-16s was the first to find any of the 300 assault rifles stolen from an army base in January, beating all his human masters to the reward.

Piso sniffed out the rifle this week in some bushes behind the house of a suspect in the January raid, army chief Gen. Chaiyasaith Swinwatra said Thursday.

Chaiyasaith said Piso will receive a sack of dog food and an artificial bone for his accomplishment.

Burning may be an accident

SYDNEY, Australia — Police said Friday that a 9-year-old girl may have been accidentally set on fire on a Sydney playground, leaving her with burns over 40 percent of her body.

Earlier, detectives investigating the incident said they were hunting for two youths suspected of deliberately torching Sarah Allan's clothes.

The incident that took place Thursday afternoon shocked the nation when police suggested Sarah may have been deliberately set on fire. However, after a 15-member police task force spent the day investigating, a senior officer said the fire may have started accidentally, although he did not rule out the possibility it was an attack.

Sheep stuffed in car

BUCHAREST, Romania — Authorities stopped a convoy of three cars after they heard the "passengers" bleating — and found the vehicles stuffed with sheep.

Three Turkish men were transporting 94 sheep in three small pickup trucks on Thursday, the Libertatea newspaper reported Friday. County veterinary authorities in the eastern village of Rediu fined the three men \$555, mistreating the animals and for not having the proper documents for them. The men intended to sell the sheep, the newspaper reported.

Activists hopping mad

CANBERRA, Australia — Animal welfare groups called Friday for an international tourist boycott of Australia in response to a cull of 800 kangaroos outside the drought-gripped national capital.

Australia's government authorized the shooting of 800 kangaroos that graze in a water catchment area surrounding Googong Dam.

"The group Animal Liberation has vowed to send protesters into the area after which the shooting occurs, to stand between the kangaroos and two commercial hunters."

It is the first time the government has resorted to a cull to protect the city's water supply.

From The Associated Press

Americans visit, help out in Cuba

Group intent on defying U.S. policy

BY VANESSA ARRINGTON
The Associated Press

HAVANA — They have been coming to Cuba for decades, building schools, pruning citrus trees and helping with the sugar harvest to show support for the communist island.

But this year's visit by members of Brigada Venceremos, a group of American activists in its 35th year, has added significance: It's a direct challenge to new U.S. rules tightening restrictions on travel to Cuba.

"The Cubans need to see that solidarity has not stopped," said Bonnie Massey, a 23-year-old high school counselor from New York City. "We're very firm on our stance. We have the moral law on our side."

The activists don't know what to expect when they return to the United States by way of Canada next week. But they say they are ready to defend what they believe is their constitutional right to travel.

The new rules cut the amount of dollars Cuban émigrés can send home and curtail visits to Cuba by cultural and academic groups as well as Cuban-Americans.

President Bush's administration hopes the measures will close loopholes in the long-standing U.S. em-

bargo on Cuba and weaken the rule of President Fidel Castro.

Brigada Venceremos has always defied the embargo by refusing to apply for a license to travel and arriving in Cuba via third countries such as Canada.

Breaking the rules can lead to fines of up to \$7,500, and the U.S. government typically notifies violators by letter after their trip.

Brigada Venceremos volunteers have received such letters in the past and have requested civil hearings. As yet they have not been called.

"I'm nervous, but I'm not scared," said Mei-ying Ho, 24, who works for a nonprofit organization in San Francisco. She added that she wasn't going to comply with "Bush's unjust policies."

The brigade began traveling to the island in 1969. During the civil rights and women's liberation movement, hundreds of activists would arrive on boats each summer, spending up to six weeks working on the island.

Today, volunteers number in the dozens, arriving by air and staying for two weeks.

"It's changed, but the concept is the same," said Massey, one of the brigade's organizers. She said the group still believes Cubans should be able to determine their own destiny without U.S. interference.



American volunteers, members of the group Brigada Venceremos, board a truck Wednesday in Cuba. AP

"We don't see Cuba as an enemy," she said. "We see it as a neighbor that we want to be friends with."

Kathe Karlson, who also came on one of the first trips in 1970, said the U.S. government has manipulated Americans for years by depicting Cuba as a dangerous nation.

"The war against Cuba hasn't stopped, it's just increasing," said Karlson, a 55-year-old social worker who declined to give her hometown. "This country does not pose a military threat to us. Our policy is outdated and wrong."

The brigade always receives a warm welcome from Cuba's government, which provides housing in the regions they visit.

This year, 77 volunteers ranging in age from 16 to 73 began their trip in the eastern city of Santiago, where they helped remodel an elementary school, visited historic sites of the Cuban revolution and were named "guests of honor" by city officials.

Most of the volunteers are students, teachers, doctors or artists.

They worked their way west, staying at a state-run camp in rural Havana province. The walls were plastered with pictures of Cuban revolutionary leaders and slogans such as "solidarity lives among the people of the world."

Brigade members sleep in bunk beds, eight to a room, then awake before sunrise for breakfast.

On Thursday, a handful of volun-

teers fought stomach problems and dehydration, but the rest piled into buses and trucks and headed off to work. One group dug trenches and laid pipes alongside Cuban workers building a physical therapy center.

"They are good workers," said 43-year-old Cuban builder Alejandro Peru. "It is risky for them to come here, but here they are. They're tough."

It was the first trip to Cuba for most of the volunteers. Larry Hales, 27, writer, activist and coffee shop employee from Denver, said he thought the United States would learn a lot from the people of the world.

"I think we've all seen the ugliness of our society, the increasing disparity," he said. "There's a desire for something better."



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Cuba embargo gets exception

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — In a rare exception to long-standing American foreign policy, U.S. officials have approved drug developer CancerVax Corp.'s deal with the Cuban government to develop three experimental cancer drugs created in Havana.

It's the first such commercial deal approved by the U.S. government between a U.S. biotechnology company and Cuba, which has spent \$1 billion building a biotechnology program that is among the most advanced in the Third World. One of the three drugs included in the deal attacks a cancer cell in a novel way.

The biotechnology company announced the deal Thursday.

Government approval comes as President Bush toughens the 41-year-old economic embargo of the communist nation CancerVax will develop the drugs in its Carlsbad laboratories and share profits with the Cuban government if any of the drugs are approved for sale in the United States.

CancerVax is a small, money-losing company that doesn't have any drugs approved for sale. It just recently began selling its stock publicly.

IN THE STATES

Stewart sentenced to 5 months in prison

Former CEO granted stay as she appeals verdict

BY ERIN MCCLAM

The Associated Press

See related stories on Page 14

NEW YORK — Domestic icon Martha Stewart was handed a prison term of just five months Friday for lying about a stock sale. After asking the judge for leniency, she emerged defiant from the courthouse to say she was being persecuted and declared, "I'll be back."

"I'm not afraid. Not afraid whatsoever. I'm very sorry it had to come to this," she told a crowd of media and supporters afterward, speaking in a strong voice on the courthouse steps.

Stewart, who was also ordered to serve five months of home confinement and fined \$30,000, did win a key victory when U.S. District Court Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum stayed her sentence pending appeal, a process that could last many months.

The sentence was also far less than it could have been. Experts had predicted she would receive 10 to 16 months for her conviction on charges she lied to federal prosecutors about the reason and circumstances surrounding her

well-timed sale of stock in ImClone Systems Inc.

In the courtroom, Stewart, 62, projected a much less confident image, appealing in a shaky voice for a reduced sentence and asking the judge to "remember all the good I have done."

"Today is a shameful day. It's shameful for me, for my family and for my company," she said. As she was sentenced, she stood and faced the judge, her jaw tight but otherwise showing little emotion.

But outside the courthouse, Stewart was confident and upbeat.

She smiled broadly to the cheers of supporters as she complained that a "small personal matter" had been blown out of proportion.

She even plugged her company's magazine and products, while joking that she didn't mean to make a sales pitch.

"Our magazines are great," she said. "They deserve your support,

and whatever happened to me personally shouldn't have any effect whatsoever on the great company Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia."

Shares in the company shot up after the sentence was announced.

The stock was up \$2.52, or nearly 30 percent, at \$11.16 in late-morning trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

Cedarbaum granted a defense request to recommend to prison officials that Stewart be assigned to a minimum-security federal prison in Danbury, Conn., close to her home in Westport.

During home confinement, which Stewart said she plans to serve at her home in Bedford, N.Y., the judge said she would consider waiving a typical provision that the detainee wear an electronic monitoring bracelet.

Cedarbaum did reject a defense request to send Stewart to a halfway house rather than prison, noting that "lying to government



Martha Stewart, flanked by U.S. Marshals, leaves after sentencing at U.S. District Court in Manhattan on Friday. Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of home confinement.

agencies during the course of an investigation is a very serious matter."

But the judge said she was imposing the lowest sentence she could under federal sentencing guidelines. "I believe that you have suffered, and will continue to suffer, enough," Cedarbaum said.

Prosecutor Karen Patton Seymour had argued for a heavier sentence.

Former Merrill Lynch & Co. stockbroker Peter Bacanovic, who was convicted along with Stewart of lying about the 2001 stock sale, received the same sentence.

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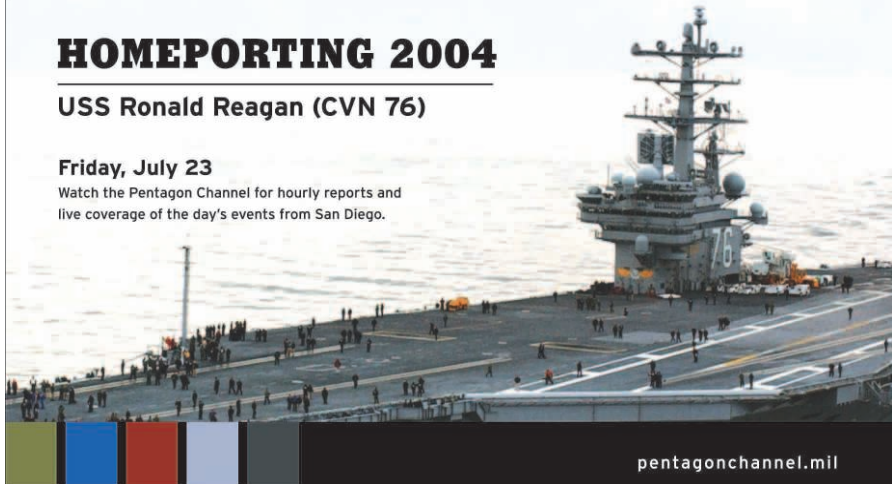
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